6: Freeman E-5 (1949-1951) 1958 OC6 Iban OC6

592 of the Iban—elaborate rituals aimed at the acquisition of longevity, prosperity
596 and prestige—are performed by independent *bilek* families.

Among the Iban there are no clans or other large-scale, corporate, kin groups, and so the *bilek* family is a social unit of primary and paramount importance. As one highly intelligent Iban[5] phrased it: 'Each *bilek* is like a sovereign country' (*'Bilek siti, baka menoa siti'*).

REPRESENTATIVE SAMPLING AND QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS

592 Before turning to detailed discussion of the characteristics of the Iban *bilek*
124 family, I should like to comment briefly on the data upon which my analysis is based. During the period of my field research the Baleh region contained 133 long-house communities, with a total population of about 11,500. After an extensive reconnaissance, Rumah Nyala[6], in the Sungai Sut, was chosen as a site for intensive investigation of Iban methods of hill rice cultivation, and an apartment, built on to the *tanju* of Rumah Nyala, became our base camp for the two years we spent in the Baleh region. Later, two other communities—Rumah Sibat, of Sungai Melinau, and Rumah Tungku, of Sungai Tiau—were also selected for detailed study, and more than four months were spent working in these two long-houses. Many additional communities were visited for shorter periods; thus, we stayed at twelve other long-houses for periods varying from two or three days to over a fortnight, and brief day visits were made to about twenty other Iban settlements in the Baleh region. For the purposes of the analysis presented in this essay, however, the *bilek* families of the three long-houses most intensively studied have been taken as a representative sample. These were:

Name of long-house	Total number of *bilek* families in long-house	Total number of members of long-house
Rumah Nyala	25	140
Rumah Sibat	32	172
Rumah Tungku	50	303
Totals	107	615

The quantitative and other evidence presented in this essay is based, then, on a sample of 107 *bilek* families drawn from three different long-house communities. These three communities, it should be remarked, are discrete entities both territorially and socially. However, although they were chosen for considerations extraneous to the theme of the present essay, it cannot be claimed that they provide us with a random selection of families. Nonetheless, it can be asserted that our 107 *bilek* families do form a representative sample, pertinent for our present inquiries.

7:Gomes M-5 (ca. 1890)1911 OC6 Iban OC6

known, may easily result in limited views and imperfect conceptions. But when his residence has extended over many years, and he knows the language as well as his own; when he has had constant opportunities of observing their tone and conduct in every relation of life, and of hearing how they talk and think on every imaginable subject, and of seeing how they behave at home as well as abroad—how they bear themselves, not only to an occasional white man whom they meet, but also to each other in social dealings—when he thus lives in close touch with them at every point, he cannot but obtain a thorough understanding of the realities of their lives.

And the Sea Dyaks are generally a very communicative people. They will willingly give information about every belief and custom, and will quietly discuss every practice and every event, good or bad; and it needs only a little patience and sympathy to enable one to get an insight into the working of their minds, and to realize the true character of their actions in the struggles, the comedies, or the tragedies of their lives.

Mr. Gomes is thus able to make the Sea Dyak live before us in genuine colours. We can see this dusky son of the jungle in his beliefs and fears, which are many, in his work and in his play, in his ugly faults and amiable virtues, in his weaknesses and in his abilities. And I think that everyone who reads his pages will feel that henceforth he knows the Sea Dyak of Sarawak better than he ever knew him before, and will come to the conclusion that, in spite of his faults, he is a very likeable man.

The Sea Dyaks, then, are worth knowing. They constitute a very valuable element in the population of Sarawak, not only from their numbers, but also from their force of character. They are active, hardworking,

17:Bedford D-5 (1958) 1959 OC6 Iban OC6
Rumah Bujak

Living as they do near the bazaar, contact with it has necessarily influenced the way of life of these people considerably. All the men have short hair and many of the women have waves. They wear a Malay type of dress or European clothes.

The majority of the people in the house profess Christianity. The majority of children in the house have for many years attended the mission school in Simnaggang. The majority of people in the house are able to read and write. Several members have attained a fairly high standard of education and are employed in Government Service.

* * *

To summarize the background briefly: Rumah Bujak is an average longhouse in the lower Batang Lupar as regards position, standard of construction and state of cleanliness. The people have attained a high level of prosperity on Sea Dayak standards. As a result their standard of living is way ahead of longhouses in many other areas of the Second Division.

DIETARY SURVEY

Method

As a sufficient proportion of the population of the house were able to write, each room was asked to keep a diary of everything they ate and drank at every meal for one week, starting on the 23rd March, 1958. At the end of this period the results were collected and the weight likely to be consumed by an average adult male was assigned to each food commodity. The estimate for rice was the most accurate since it is customary at this longhouse to measure the rice used for each meal in cigarette tins full. A portion of rice cooked for each meal is wasted but as this must be very variable no allowance was made for it; so that as rice forms usually a high proportion of the daily food intake (see below) the results will tend to err on the high side. An attempt was made to estimate the weight of other food commodities consumed without bias, so that errors would be mutually exclusive and not cumulative.

Having estimated the weight of each food commodity, its protein, fat, carbohydrate and calorie content was calculated from